DEUTSCHE BUNDESMARINE

MARINEARTILLERIESCHULE KIEL- HOLTENAU

Kiel

Belfast

Bilbao

Cherbourg

Sunderland

Halmstad

F213

ex Mermaid

F213

Training Frigate

“Scharnhorst”

First Overseas Training Cruise, 16 January to 26 March 1960

Training Group comprising the Training Frigate Scharnhorst and the Tenders Eider and Trave

TRAVEL LOG

Marinegefreiter Jürgen O H Voges 3736/58
Fachrichtung VS61

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Original German document and English translation available at: https://archive.org/details/schulfregatte-scharnhorst

English translation and editorial adaptation by family members, 21 May 2026.

Historic photographs have been digitally restored and enhanced to improve clarity and to better convey the conditions and atmosphere of the voyage. These enhanced images are intended for documentary and illustrative purposes only and are not archival master files.

Voyage Route of the Scharnhorst (Marine Artillery School, Kiel-Holtenau) and the tenders Eider and Trave

16 January 1960 - Departed Kiel (via the Kiel Canal, Pentland Firth and the Hebrides)

25 January 1960 - Arrived Belfast (Northern Ireland)

29 January 1960 - Departed Belfast

8 February 1960 - Arrived Bilbao (Spain)

12 February 1960 - Departed Bilbao

19 February 1960 - Arrived Cherbourg (France)

23 February 1960 - Departed Cherbourg

3 March 1960 - Arrived Sunderland (England)

7 March 1960 - Departed Sunderland

18 March 1960 - Arrived Halmstad (Sweden)

22 March 1960 - Departed Halmstad

24 March 1960 - Anchored in Strander Bay

25 March 1960 - Inspection by Konteradmiral (Rear Admiral) Erhardt

26 March 1960 - Arrived Kiel, Tirpitz Mole

Press Information

01 Training frigate *Scharnhorst*, formerly the British frigate *Mermaid*, of the Black Swan class; sister ships are the present German training frigates *Hipper* and *Scheer*.

02 Launched: November 1943. Commissioned: May 1944. Served as an escort frigate in the Mediterranean. Covered 200,000 nautical miles before being placed in the British Reserve Fleet in 1954.

03 The *Mermaid* was purchased by the Federal Republic of Germany in 1958. The ship was refitted at the yard of Vickers Armstrongs Ltd, Newcastle upon Tyne.

04 Transferred to the Federal German Navy on 5 May 1959. Commissioned and renamed *Scharnhorst* on 28 May 1959 at Bremerhaven.

05 Since 1 October 1959, the ship has been employed as a training vessel for Offiziersanwärter (Officer Cadets) and is undertaking an overseas training voyage from 16 January to 25 March 1960.

06 Voyage route: Northern Ireland (Belfast), Spain (Bilbao), France (Cherbourg), England (Sunderland) and Sweden (Halmstad). 48 days at sea and 20 days in port. Total distance: 3,840 nautical miles (equivalent to the distance from Kiel to South Africa).

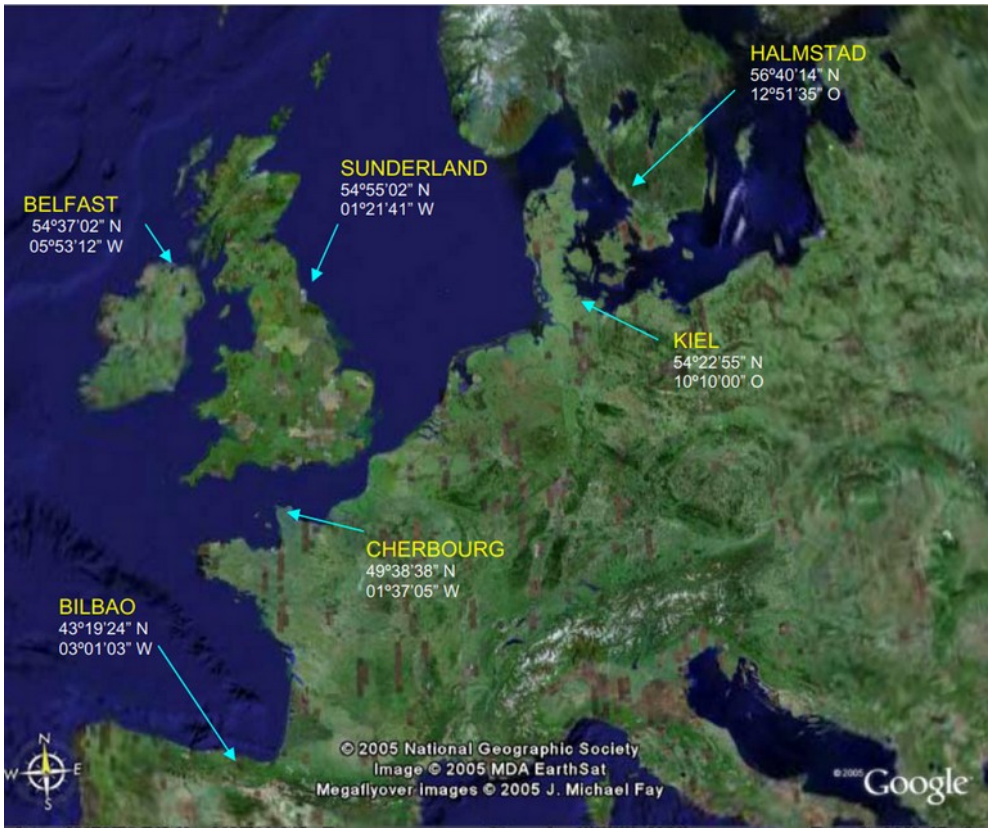
07 Technical data: length 91 m, beam 12 m, draught 3.4 m, maximum displacement 1,975 tons, maximum speed 18 knots, two boiler rooms (17 kg wet steam), two Parsons turbines, two propellers (4,300 hp), three twin-mounted 10.2 cm guns, and two 4 cm anti-aircraft guns.

08 Commanding officer: Fregattenkapitän (Commander) Karl-Heinz Fuchs, aged 47, entered the Navy in 1935. During the war he served aboard the battleship *Scharnhorst* and later as I.W.O. (First Officer of the Watch) and Kommandant (Commanding Officer) of submarines. Decorations include the Iron Cross First Class, Iron Cross Second Class, and the U-Boat and Fleet War Badges, among others. After the war he studied law and passed the state examinations. From January 1956 to October 1959 he served in the Ministry, Armed Forces Command Staff Organisation. Since 1 November 1959 he has been commanding officer of the training frigate *Scharnhorst* and leader of the training group consisting of the training frigate *Scharnhorst* and the ac-

companying ships *Eider* and *Trave* (the latter each carrying 25 reserve officer candidates).

09 On board the *Scharnhorst* are ten officers, one military chaplain, one meteorologist, and 170 petty officers and enlisted men.

10 Among the ship’s company are the regular crew (half of them newly assigned to the ship) and 44 Offiziersanwärter of whom 22 hold the Abitur (German university entrance qualification), while the remaining 22 possess an intermediate school certificate together with a completed vocational qualification. These candidates have served in the Marine since 1 April 1959 and have completed basic training and a technical course. After the overseas voyage they will be promoted to cadet and posted to the Naval Academy Mürwik in Flensburg.



V O Y A G E R O U T E

SATURDAY, 16 JANUARY 1960

Special Duty Schedule

07:30-08:30	Cleaning station
08:30-08:50	Washing and changing Dress: No. 1 blue uniform, sailor cap, detachable collar, silk neckerchief, black shoes; on deck, greatcoat and gloves
09:00-09:25	Visitors on board, or members of the ship's company on the pier and in the dock area to say farewell to relatives
09:35	Prepare to fall out for departure
09:40	Ship's company (except watchkeepers) muster on the quarterdeck
09:45	Divisional reports to the I.O. (Executive Officer)
09:50	Report by the First Officer to the Kommandant (also Group Commander)
09:55	Report by the Group Commander to the Commander of the Naval Training Command
10:00	At manoeuvring stations, stand by to cast off
10:15	Cast off; enter the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal (99 km)
14:30-15:30	Emergency drill

13:00. Finally in the Kiel Canal (at km 95.5). Everything has gone according to plan. Last night the E-plant I (turbogenerator) failed, and we thought we might have to go back into the yard today. But the mechanics managed to fix it by about 23:00, and it is now running again with its constant howling at 8000 revolutions per minute.

Personally, a huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders, because now my office comrades and I can finally rest and recover from the exertions of the past weeks. Since August '59 we have practically been busy fitting out the ship. Two months in the yard in Hamburg at Stülcken. On 01.10.59 we received 44 Offiziersanwärter on board, which caused a great deal of additional work. Training cruises in the Baltic were carried out. The longest trip took us in November through the Kattegat and Skagerrak into the North Sea.

There we were caught in a storm (force 10) and became involved in a search operation for a crashed British aircraft. Despite two days of intensive searching, even entering partially mined waters, and working together with 14 ships, we were unable to find it. We were all deeply discouraged.

Taking on ammunition (each shell weighs approximately 20 kg)

In December we returned to the yard again, this time to the Lindemann yard in Kiel. The ship was docked and the hull repainted. In addition, all superstructures and outer hull surfaces were freshly painted by the seamanship crew. In the last week we took on ammunition and provisions: about 1500 rounds for the 6 x 10.2 cm guns and 2000 for the 2 x 4 cm guns (Bofors AA)[1], as well as 21 tons of provisions. I wonder how long that will last.

At the moment everything is still being lashed down for sea. But

1) *Editor's note:* In standard naval terminology this refers to three twin-mounted QF 4-inch (10.2 cm) Mk XVI dual-purpose guns (six barrels in total) and two single 40 mm Bofors anti-aircraft guns.

little by little a pleasant sense of lethargy begins to spread. One becomes a human being again, with interests of one’s own, and I could sing for joy at having escaped the maelstrom of endless bustle. Now one can say: what does not get done today can wait until tomorrow - or the day after. My God, what a wonderful feeling.

I am just going to see the Sick Berth Attendant and get a few tablets for seasickness, because I have no intention of letting my good mood be spoiled, although I ought really to be Neptune’s favourite son - so often and so generously I have already made my sacrifices to him.

Yesterday I helped the Paymaster count the money for the first issue of foreign currency - British pounds and Spanish pesetas. I was literally sitting on the money; the pile was so enormous. It must have amounted to a little over 120,000 Deutsche Marks.

The weather cleared somewhat around midday. During the farewell at Tirpitz Mole in Kiel, attended by Konteradmiral Erhardt, there was heavy snowfall. I said goodbye to my mother over the telephone while we were in the Holtenau lock. She had heard about the snowstorms and was very worried. But everything will probably turn out fine - at least I hope so.

At 14:25 we passed the signal station at Großkönigsförde. At 21:30 we tied up in the Brunsbüttelkoog lock. We were delayed quite a while by oncoming ships. At 22:30 we got underway again - out into the North Sea.

“Mast and shrouds safe!”

I tumble into my hammock and hope the weather will be better tomorrow.

21 January 1960 - At last I am able to get back to my diary. I shall now continue my account in chronological order.

SUNDAY, 17 JANUARY 1960

When we were woken, we were already north of Heligoland. It is a beautiful morning, but there is quite a swell. By midday the sea has changed completely. Whitecaps danced on the waves, and the old tub was pitching most unpleasantly.

Neptune is clearly enjoying himself at my expense. The tablets are of no use whatsoever. Since it's Sunday, I can turn in in my hammock at 15:00 and have a good snooze. The ship groans and creaks under the impact of the heavy seas.

Tirpitz Mole, Kiel - Farewell in a Snowstorm

MONDAY, 18 JANUARY 1960

After reveille, I rushed straight up to the upper deck and stayed there all day on the 4 cm gun platform. A marvellous place.

When one thinks about it, one can only shake one's head. I watched the two tenders. They were obviously playing submarine. It is impossible to imagine what those little ships had to endure. At times only the tops of their masts could be seen protruding above the mountains of waves.

Our chaplain sent a message asking whether spiritual assistance was required. They replied: "How great is the mercy of the Almighty?"

I believe there is no point in telling people ashore about the storm - they would never believe it.

TUESDAY, 19 JANUARY 1960

abeam of Aberdeen

Land in sight. The Scottish coast has appeared. The weather is miserable. So am I.

At muster on the forecastle, the Rechnungsführer (Paymaster, to whose office I had been attached at his own request) snaps at me on deck and I have to get to work. Like a beaten dog, I tuck my ever-present bucket under my arm and follow him.

In the Refüchap (Paymaster's office), however, I felt somewhat better. I had to write and copy all kinds of lists. When everything was done, I had to throw up. At 16:00 o'clock: we pass through the Pentland Firth. The Orkney Islands look bleak and unwelcoming. Memories of the Imperial Fleet and of Prien come

vividly to mind[2].

From Duncansby Head (northern Scotland), a foghorn blows over, sounding almost asthmatic and the lighthouse acts as if its light were frozen - it flashes so rarely. With a current of 9 miles and a speed of 10 km, we pass the northernmost point of Scotland. I feel a bit better.

WEDNESDAY, 20 JANUARY 1960

This morning I witnessed a scene of such exquisite beauty that words fail me to describe it properly. We were passing through the Minch. To starboard lay the snow-covered mountains of the Hebrides, and to port the rugged mountain ranges of western Scotland. Behind the Scottish mountains, the sun was rising and bathed the peaks in an unreal, pastel pink light. A bright star shone in the deep dark-blue sky. The faint colours of dawn were reflected from the snow-covered slopes of the otherwise dark Hebrides, and our three ships moved through this silent splendour as if strung along on a single thread. I believe only the North can offer such treasures.

But unfortunately the serious business of life soon began again, and I disappeared into my office and was hard at work once more.

In the afternoon we steamed among the islands. There was no sign of any inhabitants, though now and then one could make out a poor little cottage through the glasses.

At 20:00 a terrible storm began to rage. I had just finished my work. The anemometers showed wind force 12 and more. As quickly as possible I went below and dived into the "Miefkorb," ("stinking basket") as we call our sleeping quarters.

During the night I woke up. The old tub heeled over so violently several times that everything which was not more or less lashed down for sea went flying all over the place. Günter was struck on the head by a soda-water bottle, and Peter suddenly found the large mailbag in his bunk.

I grinned to myself. Not for nothing had I slung my hammock directly beneath the deckhead.

THURSDAY, 21 JANUARY 1960

Because of the heavy storm, we are cruising off the English coast

2) *Editor's Note:* Günther Prien (1908-1941) was a German U-boat commander famous for his 1939 attack on Scapa Flow, where he sank HMS Royal Oak. Scapa Flow was also the site where the German High Seas Fleet was scuttled in 1919.

instead of the Irish one. Up and down, up and down. Oh, and the old tub rolls so horribly. I have to go outside from time to time to get some fresh air.

I force myself to sit down at the typewriter and hammer away as if I were trying to break the world record of 650 strokes per minute.

By midday I begin to feel queasy. I sneak into the galley and, perched on an apple crate, eat a plate of tomato soup. It tastes delicious. I also manage to scrounge a few apples.

At last we set course for Ireland. At 15:00 we enter Belfast Lough. The anchor rattles out through the hawse pipe. Here we must now wait until 25 January before we are allowed to go into harbour.

Until then I still have a lot to do, because the crew must be given money for shore leave - about £4 each.

FRIDAY, 22 JANUARY 1960

Routine duties. The seamen are painting the ship, while I sit working on my pay list. But I have rarely heard so much nonsense as today. Everyone knows perfectly well when and where there is something to stow. And when money is involved, even the sleepiest soul is wide awake and standing at the hatch in his pyjamas.

But heaven help us when it comes to paying money in - then even the cleverest man suddenly turns completely stupid. In our case, tensions have arisen because of the sudden change in the way the food allowance contribution was collected. Until the end of 1959, the money was deducted automatically. Since January 1960, however, it has to be paid in separately.

Most of the men, of course, have no money left, and are highly annoyed when we tell them that the amount will be deducted from their shipboard allowance.

SATURDAY, 23 JANUARY 1960

Outside, the weather is glorious. I feel like doing absolutely nothing. But unfortunately that is not possible.

The seamen are still busily painting the ship and washing off old paint. During the lunch break I sat in the Director, the ship's gunnery control station, and watched the coast. Through the glasses one could almost see the people's faces several miles away.

It is strangely warm here as well. At night I can hardly sleep

with the porthole open because of the heat. That must be the Gulf Stream. In winter it never gets much colder than 0°C here, and in summer not much warmer than 25°C.

Ireland is very beautiful, at least what we can see from our anchorage is most pleasant. Opposite us lies the town of Bangor, and through our binoculars we take part in the life and bustle of the town.

SUNDAY, 24 JANUARY 1960

Today is no Sunday for us. Reveille at 06:00. I have a terrible headache because I was chatting with the Refü (Paymaster) until 02:00 in the morning.

There is a church service on board, but unfortunately I cannot attend because I have no time. The blasted cash account still doesn't quite balance. In addition, the food allowance ledger has to be completed by 31 January, and the last fair copy turned out to be incorrect.

I could have cried with rage, because one spends hours over such a list, stamping a small mark for each of the 182 men into the appropriate column 31 times each - about 5,642 times in all.

After duty we finally paid out the advance on the shipboard allowance in British pounds.

Tomorrow is the great day - we shall enter Belfast. The lads have really worked hard, painting, washing, scrubbing and repairing. But now I must get into my bunk as quickly as possible, because I am very tired and have not slept properly for a long time.

MONDAY, 25 JANUARY 1960

At 09:30, "Anchor aweigh!" and off to Belfast.

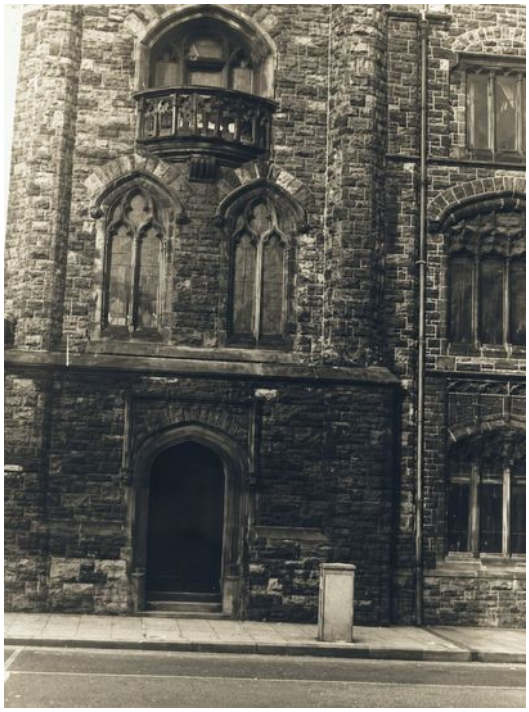
At 10:00 we moored in Pollock Dock. Hardly anyone was there to greet us on the quay - only the German Naval Attaché from London. Unfortunately, the newspapers had written against us a few days earlier, and that probably still weighed on people's minds.

At about 14:30 in the afternoon, Günter and I went with the V.O. (Supply Officer) to the post office to collect our mail. In the lift of the post office there was a large black swastika painted on the wall. Unfortunately, there were only two letters.

Entering Belfast Lough

From the post office I simply wandered through the streets, following my nose. It was very interesting. Most people did not know that I was German, and those to whom I told it shook my hand. I took a number of photographs.

When I became thirsty, I went into a pub for a beer. It tasted dreadful, but the place itself was very cosy and clean. In this respect the Irish are indeed somewhat cleaner than the English. One must never address them as English. They are Irish from Northern Ireland.



soot-blackened buildings

Anchor aweigh!

In the evening I went to the Plaza, a dance hall, and enjoyed myself quite well. I met a genuine Irish girl named Mairead (Margaret) Stranaghan. She could not be persuaded that I was unmarried, but I had a great deal of fun nevertheless. I genuinely admired the fact that she was not like some other girls. She asked me to write something in German in her notebook. I wrote her a letter in which I explained the present state of relations with Germany. She probably thought it was a love letter.

Unfortunately, I had to be back on board by midnight. We had to break up and make our way back. My mates arranged to meet the girls again on Wednesday evening. Unfortunately, I have no time, because I must work to complete the monthly accounts. By 23:30 we were back on board.

TUESDAY, 26 JANUARY 1960

This morning I was just about to telephone the post office when a postal van drove up and delivered the mail, as they say here. Unfortunately, there was no letter for me, and I was rather disappointed. But there are far worse things in life than receiving no post.

Afterwards, as usual, I disappeared into the Refüchap, and the two of us tried to get the cash account to balance.

Tonight there is a grand party, and I shall report in white uniform and serve drinks.

WEDNESDAY, 27 JANUARY 1960

The party did not end until 03:30. Seven hours continuously on my feet and seven hours of endless "keep smiling". The high society of Belfast got pleasantly plastered at our expense. Once most of the guests had left, those who remained started dancing.

In any case, I woke up this morning with a splitting headache. I got very little work done, because I felt as though my eyes were about to fall out of my head.

THURSDAY, 28 JANUARY 1960

Today we visited the Ulster Weaving Company Ltd in Belfast. Taxis collected us from the ship and took us to the company's weaving works. There we were given a very warm welcome by the boss, Sir Graham Larmor, who arranged for us to be shown around the factory in several groups. It was extremely interesting and quite revealing, particularly because the plant was badly outdated. In other words, some of the machines were more than thirty years old and had no safety guards whatsoever. The room containing about 800 looms was terribly cramped. The whole place ought to be modernised - Sir Graham could make even more money then.

After the tour we were served tea and biscuits, and had a splendid time talking together. Since Obermaat (Senior Petty Officer) T. and I usually worked together, we stayed together on this occasion as well, and I acted as his interpreter. It worked wonderfully. I introduced him as the Paymaster (Zahlmeister) and myself as the Paymaster's Assistant.

At the end, the boss presented each of us with a box of handkerchiefs and a colourful cocktail napkin. That was very generous. He also mentioned that his company's general representative in Germany was a former Kapitän zur See (Captain, naval rank), which probably explained the excellent understanding between us.

Anyone who wished could take a taxi back home - that is, back to the ship. *The Paymaster and I*[3] had ourselves driven into town instead. There we had a meal for four shillings and ate remarkably well.

3) Editor's note: Jürgen used the english terms here

At 20:00 we went to the Plaza Ballroom. I danced only once. Unfortunately, the Irish dance nothing but rock 'n' roll, and I want no part of that. After all, I am not a performing monkey. After drinking ourselves into a "terrific intoxication" on orange juice and Coca-Cola, we strolled home quite leisurely - that is, back on board.

FRIDAY, 29 JANUARY 1960

Before sailing, Günter and I made a quick dash to the post office. Unfortunately there was nothing for either of us. Thoroughly annoying. By the time we returned to the dock, the old tub was just about to cast off. At 15:00 we slipped and turned our bows seaward.

Foggy weather, with a slight swell.

SATURDAY, 30 JANUARY 1960

At 11:30 we entered the Atlantic. I am already making heavy sacrifices again. I could slap myself. But there is no help for it - I feel sick as a dog.

SUNDAY, 31 JANUARY 1960

Today we actually have Sunday routine. Once again I spent the whole day sitting on the upper deck. Towards evening I went into the emergency wireless room and listened to the radiotelephone traffic between our three ships. It is very interesting and makes one forget about seasickness.

"ST (Sierra Tango) or SZ (Sierra Zulu), this is SV (Sierra Victor - the call sign of Scharnhorst), over."

The ship being called then replies: "SV, this is ST" or "SZ, over." Only then is the message or the coordination passed on.

I turned in early.

MONDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 1960

I have to force myself to work. I have eaten very little for

quite some time and feel extremely weak. It is dreadful. My head feels like a hollowed-out pumpkin. I simply must eat and drink something.

In the afternoon, from 13:00 to 16:00, we paid out money. I pulled myself together with a tremendous effort - and it worked.

I worked with the Paymaster until 23:30. I had some mushroom soup from the middle watch, and it agreed with me very well.

TUESDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 1960

This is where we lost our anchor! Longitude: 3°25′5″ West · Latitude: 43°26′5″ North

We are steaming back and forth off Santander.At about 11:00 we entered a bay. It is wonderfully romantic here, and the climate feels like summer. I feel like a new man.

Before I turn in, I am going to have a bath in the "brook".

So far I have experienced so many beautiful moments on this voyage that I am quite willing to put up with the days of seasickness.

Today I prepared a large comparative statement of the various amounts. I spent almost the whole day on it. Unfortunately, I was not allowed to swim in the sea. I feel as though I were in a girls' boarding school.

WEDNESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 1960

Today the first fishing boat came alongside and brought the Harbour Master of Santoña on board. The fishermen offered wine from a traditional goatskin wine bag. It was quite amusing to watch some of the men squirting the wine into their nostrils instead of their mouths.

During the lunch break we began paying out the remaining balances. We worked until 23:30. Translated invoices.

Hammock tore and sagged badly. I had to sleep on one side, otherwise I would have fallen out. Had the middle watch.

THURSDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 1960

At anchor in Santoña Bay

For two days now, the weather has become a bit colder. The sky is overcast. The ship is rolling almost like at sea. That is caused by the long Atlantic swell which reaches all the way in here.

This morning, our Kommandant went to Santoña by motorboat to get permission for us to enter the Bay of Santoña, since with this rolling it is hardly possible to work.

At lunch I almost did not get full, because the food - we had roast chicken - kept wanting to go over the edge of the plate. I took a second deep plate, and there it was - the gimballed "soup-plate suspension rolling-compensation device" had been invented. Only I had to wash two plates.

FRIDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 1960

At anchor in Santoña Bay - the tenders Eider and Trave in the background

At 05:30 we were woken by the Bootsmanns (boatswain's) whistle, with its shrill trilling that went through marrow and bone, sounding as if 1000 rats were having their tails cut off. I've still got a bit of a headache from last night. We celebrated - I think the renovation of the office (there always can be found a reason to celebrate).

07:00 ready for sea. We move into the Bay of Santoña. Perhaps we an go ashore tomorrow. If that happens - have fun. I'll no doubt be digging around once again trying to exchange pesetas, and I won't get ashore myself. That is the wretched part of life on board. One is buried in work; there seems to be no end to it, and

At anchor in Santoña Bay.

one is constantly being driven on by one's superiors (though of course I do not let myself be pushed about - I know perfectly well what I have to do).

But the moment one has a small and modest request, they hide behind regulations and put on a very mournful face, explaining that they cannot help. If only one were a little more devious, a few of these gentlemen would have been nicely caught out by now.

07:28 we dropped anchor. People poured and streamed out of the houses and stood staring at us. For hours they lined the pier, watching our ship.

SATURDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 1960

Today is a glorious sunny day. We are walking about with our shirt sleeves rolled up - and that in February.

Around midday, permission actually comes that the crew may go ashore. The two of us worked like mad to put together a pay list in half an hour.

Then came the payout. Everyone received 400 pesetas, and the engine-room ratings got 500 pesetas. I climbed up to the bridge and announced the start of the payment over the loudspeaker. By the time I had come down the two ladders, the whole Commanding Officer's lobby was already packed with lads[4]. Within half an hour we had paid more than half the crew.

View from the mast looking down onto the quarterdeck.

By "the two of us", I mean the Rech-

4) Editor's note: The original German uses the English word "Lords" as a humorous and affectionate nickname for the ordinary sailors and ratings. Since the term sounds playfully ironic in German but would be misleading if translated literally into English, it has been rendered here as "the lads".

The bullring in Santoña

nungsführer (Paymaster) and myself. As luck would have it, we were on duty as the harbour watch. I got in touch with the V.O., and sure enough, we were allowed ashore. We quickly dumped all our stuff in a corner and made a rapid exit from the office. At last I was able to have a proper shower again. It is a marvellous feeling when hot water runs down one's back.

At 18:05 we stepped onto Spanish ground. The first words we heard were: "¿Hablas cigaredas?" ("Do you have any cigarettes?"). If they had been older people, one might perhaps not have thought much of it, but they were little boys, barely seven years old. We had to make a real effort not to give them anything, because if we had, we would never have got rid of the whole gang.

Santoña's Main Street

Santoña is quite unremarkable. It is a seaside resort, and the people seem to have used up most of their savings. They have very little money and found it difficult to change our large banknotes.

They have vino tinto here!

Now we wanted to try Spanish wine and went into one of the bars for that. It was already lively inside, and fraternising was in full swing. I got us two glasses of Vino Tinto. First it did not taste good at all - but after the third glass we got the taste for it. There was dancing at the Plaza.

We sat down in a corner of the bar and talked with a few dark-eyed señoritas, communicating with our hands and feet. We had intended - and I must confess this to my shame - to get them drunk. But they were much too clever and suddenly began ordering whisky. Since whisky was very expensive, we gave up the attempt, and they rewarded us with smouldering, languishing looks. That, however, was as far as we got. When we offered to escort them home, they declined - and vanished. Out of sheer annoyance, we drank more vino tinto.

Then we went, a little swaying, to dance. I danced like I did never before. The girls have it in their blood, and you don’t have to lead them.

At 23:30 we unfortunately had to get going and return on board. On the way, we saw some of our officers and Portopeeunteroffiziere (senior petty officers) in a pub. They had got into a singing contest with the Spaniards. We eagerly joined in. I was quite hoarse when we went back on board.

Unfortunately, we witnessed - or rather heard of - the first breach of discipline on this voyage. One of the lads had threatened the patrol leader with a knife in his hand. A great pity, because things had been so wonderfully cosy here.. I spent a full 31 pesetas (2.10 marks) and was quite full.

SUNDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 1960

I should add one more thing about yesterday’s singing contest: Germans and Spaniards together sang “Silent Night, Holy Night”. The song was hardly appropriate to the season, but it brought us closer together as human beings.

During the night another strop on my hammock gave way. I was lying at a considerable list in the “Miefkorb” and had great difficulty sleeping in such a way that I did not fall out.

At reveille, almost every man had a hangover from the wine. If anyone accidentally mentions the words “vino tinto” today, he can be quite sure that a sea boot will come flying after him.

At 13:00 we hear “Anchor aweigh!” We are moving back to Punta del Caballo, where we lay before entering Santoña. We have to make fresh water, and for that deep water is required. The old tub begins pitching again. (Longitude 3°25′05” West, Latitude 43°26′05” North)

MONDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 1960

Tonight, at 00:20, Scharnhorst No. 3 very nearly came to grief on

the steep reefs of Punta del Caballo. It was truly eerie. The night was pitch-black, and the sea was shaking our ship violently. Suddenly there was a tremendous crash and the anchor cable parted. The ship immediately began to drift and, strangely enough, was carried past the jagged rocks and into Bay of Santoña. But our engines (and their crew) were fully alert. A few minutes later both propellers began churning and brought us back to our old anchorage. There the second anchor was dropped. It is certainly a good thing when a ship has two anchors.

At 07:00 we heard "Anchor aweigh!" and steamed abeam of the sea towards Portugalete. This town lies nine kilometres from Bilbao and offers better berthing facilities.

In the evening - after we had first taken a stroll through Portugalete to post letters and buy stamps - we travelled by coach to Bilbao for a dance evening organised by the German colony. It was very pleasant.I escorted three Spanish ladies to our table. One of them spoke some German, as her father was German. We had a very enjoyable conversation and danced as well.

The evening was laid on very generously. We could eat as much as we liked, free of charge. A pretty girl performed a folk dance to the clatter of castanets. For tomorrow we invited the girls to visit us on board.

River Crossing between Portugalete and Bilbao

Party at the Arizona, Bilbao

TUESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 1960

A great deal of work today. I must finally finish the English invoices. At 18:00 I have to report to the pantry.

Of the three ladies, only one came this afternoon - thank God, the one who speaks German. We had a very pleasant conversation.

Party on Board - Conversation with the German Military Attaché in Spain

It may be interesting to note that Spanish girls, provided they come from respectable families, are very strict in matters of morality. If one does not bear that in mind, one can come badly unstuck. I do not mean to suggest that I tried anything. After all, there is little point in turning a girl's head and then sailing away. I think that is rather mean. It might even happen that one falls in love oneself - and then one goes about for days like a miserable wreck.

At 18:00 the party began. There were 120 guests present. Mamma mia, what a crush it was! But in spite of everything, it worked out - as always. At the end I managed to scrounge a bottle of sherry and gave it to my boss.

WEDNESDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 1960

This morning I discovered that my boss was a complete corpse. I thought he had alcohol poisoning. He could hardly speak. I piled a heap of mailbags under the table in our pay office and dragged him underneath it. Then I covered him with a blanket and let him sleep. The curious thing was that he absolutely insisted on keeping his cap on. I turned out the light and worked on the galley's month-end accounts in another compartment.

In the afternoon we had visitors again, this time two young ladies, Erika and Mariana. We consumed considerable quantities of alcohol.

Just as things were becoming pleasantly cosy, three of Erika's aunts arrived as well. They were of somewhat riper years and carried on a sparkling conversation with their eyes. Apparently, in Spain moral restraint declines with advancing age. Just when things had become thoroughly convivial, they had to leave, because a Spanish girl is expected to be home by 22:00. We accompanied them to the train.

Afterwards, the Sick Berth Maat (Petty Officer, I had sewn his rate badge back on for him, as he was still too incapacitated by yesterday's drinking to do it himself), Maat K. (a former close companion from the Barum camp) and I went out for another drink.

All in all, I drank nine glasses of Vino Tinto and had quite a kick in the heel, as we say aboard ship - in other words, I had a slight list to starboard.

THURSDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 1960

I have a terrific headache. That blasted vino tinto. While you are drinking it, you feel wonderful, but the next morning you have an unbelievable hangover. And of all days, today I am supposed to work. I really had no desire to. *Mañana* - tomorrow.

After lunch I stretched out on the mailbags in our Chap (shipboard slang, from "chapter", meaning our office) and dozed off. When I woke up at 15:00-I was in urgent need of attending to a basic human necessity - I discovered that my keys had disappeared. My boss had accidentally put them in his pocket. I have seldom sworn so much.

The only tool I had with me was my combination pliers, which have accompanied me throughout my naval service so far. The ship was like a ghost town - the lads were almost all ashore. At last I sent out SOS in tapping signals, over and over again, until a

Fire Control Petty Officer was so irritated by the banging that he appeared at my hatch in a fury. He passed me a screwdriver through a tiny crack in the door. Unfortunately, the screws would not turn; for security reasons they had been riveted over on the outside. By now I no longer cared what happened. I used the screwdriver as a chisel and hammered away for nearly half an hour until I had broken out all four screws. How many blows landed on my poor fingers I would rather not say.

At 16:30 I was due at the station to meet our visitors. I arrived just in time. I was glad to have an interpreter with me during the shopping trip that followed. She looked after me with touching care. When I wanted to buy a scarf for my mother, she turned the whole shop upside down for nearly half an hour to make sure I found exactly what I wanted.

Then we went on board for supper, but the girls ate nothing. They have breakfast at 11:00, lunch at 15:00, and supper is not served until 22:00.

Together we drank a bottle of Rhine wine and then went dancing at the Plaza, which lay exactly 100 metres ahead of the ship. As it was very cold for the girls (while we felt as though it were summer), we went into a café and stayed there for a while. Erika telephoned her parents, and they invited us to their flat in Bilbao. I would very much have liked to go along and see the inside of a Spanish home, but unfortunately there was not enough time before we had to return. So we said our goodbyes at the station - (perhaps) never to meet again.

Afterwards we intended to continue drinking, but I thought of my poor head and of tomorrow's sea passage. We must recover our anchor from Santoña. I hope it is still lying on the seabed. We have cut a notch into the ship at the point where the anchor cable parted, though that alone will probably not help us very much. But several cross-bearings were taken, so it should not be too difficult to find our anchor again.

Departure from Portugalete (the transporter bridge seen from the opposite side)

FRIDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 1960

At 10:00 we were ready for sea and put to sea once again. Our departure from

Farewell to Spain - Portugalete / Bilbao

Portugalete was a veritable public celebration. People streamed in from every direction and waved to us.

The German school sent a large coach full of schoolchildren. They were very young children, waving little German flags. They were delightful to watch. Then they sang a German song. It was very moving.

We gave three cheers for our friends, and the sound echoed back from the houses. Then we steamed out into the open sea with the ship's company formed up facing to port.

After that we set course for Santoña to search for - and hopefully recover - our precious anchor. Our divers searched from midday until nightfall and still found nothing. As far as I am concerned, the search may continue for some time yet, because it is peaceful here at the anchorage and I can catch up on all the work that was left unfinished in Portugalete.

SATURDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 1960

Frogmen at Work

Around midday the anchor was finally found by the frogmen.[5] It took until evening before the anchor was recovered and safely back in its hawse pipe. At 21:00, "Anchor aweigh!" and course north.

The Spanish coast takes its leave of us in the silvery moonlight. It is a mysterious sight.

There it is again!

5) As a reward for two days of back-breaking work, the V.O. (Supply Officer) gave each of the two divers a tin of fruit cocktail.

SUNDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 1960

"Captured" by three French frigates

Today we are allowed to sleep a little longer. It is a very beautiful day. The sun is already shining quite warmly, though from time to time we have a rain shower.

One of our engines has broken down. We are crawling through the water at four knots.

I am now translating the Spanish invoices. Unfortunately, I do not know any Spanish, so I have to search the whole ship for people who can help me. A laborious business. I managed to complete the English invoices entirely on my own.

MONDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 1960

Today is my birthday. I had not thought about it at all until Günther congratulated me. The engine is fit again now, and we are once more "racing" across the sea at fifteen knots.

In the late afternoon, three French frigates meet us. Without so much as a greeting, they steamed past us in line ahead. The French always have to be contrary. We were not allowed to enter Brest because some gentlemen protested - even the mayor of the city.

How it will be in Cherbourg, no one knows yet. But the whole crew will do its best to prove to the people that we are no maneater. Towards evening we rounded Ushant (Île

The English Channel ahead, the headland astern to starboard

d'Ouessant) and entered the English Channel. We're following in the footsteps of Scharnhorst II[6]. Only this time, it's not nearly as dangerous.

At last I have finished my invoices.

TUESDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 1960

The hardships of all that endless "offering" are written all over my face.

At 09:50 we dropped anchor, close alongside Eider and Trave, which had gone on ahead from Bilbao. Opposite us lies the village of Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue, about twenty-five miles north of Cherbourg. So we shall have to return there on Friday.

The weather is fine, but very cool. Spain has spoiled us. I shall have to put on my long underwear again and wear my Iceland sweater under my white drill sailor's working shirt.

We have just paid out our military pay and separation allowance. We still do not have any French money on board. I shall be curious to see when we get the stuff and when we shall be able to pay it out.

WEDNESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 1960

Nothing of particular note today. In the evening we celebrated my birthday, Günter's promotion to Gefreiter (roughly: Lance Corporal), and the 150th entry in this diary. It was a very pleasant evening. Only the guests refused to leave when I wanted to turn in.

HURSDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 1960

At 15:00 we shifted anchorage off Cherbourg. One engine unserviceable.

After supper I went up to the bridge with my binoculars. The weather was magnificent; the sea was as smooth as a mirror and the sky blue. But the wind blowing across the deck was icy cold. From the bridge I spotted a small dot ahead through my glasses,

6) *Editor's note:* a previous German warship bearing the same name

which rapidly grew larger. I reported to the W.O. that there was a French submarine.

The French submarine

Everyone on the bridge was amazed and wondered why of all people I, the junior clerk with permanently bleary eyes, should have been the first to spot the boat. It came towards us very quickly. I climbed into the Director of the fire-control system, and from there we tracked the submarine in the crosshairs.

Normally I always keep my Minox camera in my left breast pocket, but of all times I had forgotten it today. The submarine turned just astern of us and then came racing past on our port side. The commanding officer of the submarine even piped the side, which we returned with equal courtesy and smartness. Then general waving broke out. Good heavens, I would never have believed the French capable of such friendliness.

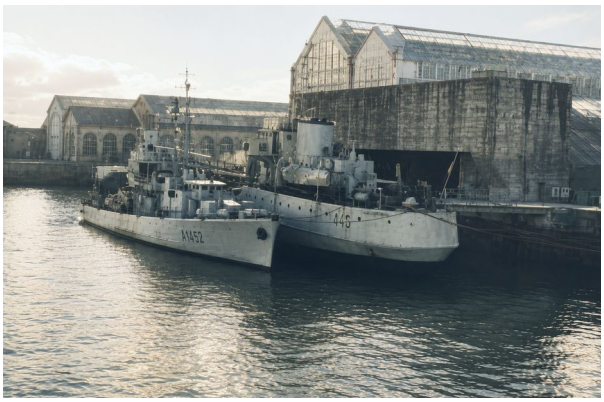
At anchor off Cherbourg

I dashed down to my chap and fetched my Minox. Perhaps I shall still get a usable photograph. Five French minesweepers passed astern of us in line ahead, about five miles away. We were obviously being kept under close observation. Yesterday a jet fighter had thundered overhead as well.

FRIDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 1960

Last night I worked until 01:00 because I wanted to get my paperwork finished at last. This morning we heard "Anchor aweigh!" and entered the naval harbour at Cherbourg. I must say, it is an impressive harbour complex. After Günther and I had brought the mailbags on board, the V.O. took me to the bank to collect some money.

A landing craft being used as a tug



Our neighbours in the naval harbour (who do you suppose built the bunker?)

Literally a heap of money - 46,800 NF

Cherbourg actually makes a very clean and tidy impression. At the bank I stuffed 46,800 NF (nouveaux francs, about 40,700 Deutsche Marks) into my pocket. People must have stared at that pile of money.

Kptlt (Lieutenant Commander) Boller (he had been at the *Marineversorgungsschule MVS* - Naval Supply School - when I was there) drove us around for a while. Then we returned to the ship. By then I was left with nothing but cold food. I was rather annoyed.

Then came the payout. Paying out the money was somewhat difficult, because the French are apparently very economical. After knocking two zeros off their currency, they nevertheless left the old banknotes in circulation. Some of the men thought we were trying to cheat them when they received 1,000-franc notes instead of 10-franc notes.

In the evening we had three French sailors in our office: an interpreter and two drivers for the officers. We invited them over for supper. They were quite impressed. They like German black bread, too. Then the interpreter left, and I found myself sitting with two lads who spoke no German. We played *"Mensch ärgere Dich nicht"* (the German version of Ludo). It worked splendidly. Although I lost, I can now count in French - at least that is some progress.

Angela gave me a seafaring book. Unfortunately, I already have one. But tonight I intend to turn in early. At last I have had another proper shower with hot water.

SATURDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 1960

The Traffic Policeman

This morning we worked like mad to get everything finished by midday, because we wanted to go ashore. At last it was done.

I asked one of the two French drivers to take us into town in this rain. Like the Spaniards, he grinned broadly and proudly as we rolled past the senior officers, who were trudging through the rain on foot. Haha, I have seldom laughed so much. He dropped us off at the post office. There we wanted to buy stamps.

Oh dear, what a performance that turned out to be. The people apparently could not understand us. By the time we left the post office, sweat was running down our backs. Then we bought some postcards, which were frightfully expensive.

In pouring rain we returned to the ship rather quickly. What is remarkable is that one always manages to find one's way back. We'd been to the most out-of-the-way corners, but when we wanted to head back, we only had to twist and turn around a few whole blocks and, lo and behold, we were home.

Back on board I took off my wet uniform and hung it over the heating. A blessing that it worked. While my clothes were drying, I busily wrote postcards.

At 21:00 we went by bus to a naval ball. It was a complete brush-off affair - the girls simply wouldn't dance with the German lads. I didn't get the brush-off, because I didn't ask anyone to dance. Some of the girls were real old frumps and hardly worth fighting over. What these old crows imagine about themselves, I'd like to know. (Perhaps they get their heads shaved if they become involved with a German.[7])

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7) *Editor's Note:* This is an allusion to the public humiliation of women in several European countries after the Second World War, when those accused of having relationships with German soldiers often had their heads shaved as a form of punishment and social ostracism.

The two of us drank two bottles of Rhine wine and then set off cheerfully for home, with a tiny monkey on our backs. On the way I bought a bag of crisps, which tasted excellent.

Although, as an exception, we had shore leave until 04:00, hardly anyone took full advantage of it.

SUNDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 1960

Today I treated myself to a day of sleep. Under the table in our Refüchap I dozed away the whole morning and three hours of the afternoon. When I was supposed to be working, I played dead and simply locked up the office.

My boss was quite understanding - hardly surprising, since I help him get rid of his “monkeys” and “gorillas”. The two of us are on very friendly terms. That is, however, rather delicate in the military. One can very quickly attract suspicious looks - he as much as I. But we pay little attention to that. We both hold to the principle: work together and celebrate together. I enjoy being with him, because he is a very experienced man from whom one can learn a great deal. He has a very soft nature. This becomes apparent when he has been drinking. Then he opens up and tells me all about his troubles and worries.

The next day he is usually a little embarrassed and slips back into his official role. Then he cuts such a comical figure that I have to exert all my self-control to keep a straight face. I’m glad he is my superior, because you can discuss any work-related problem with him with real passion.

He told me himself that I am very poor material for a subordinate (I cannot be intimidated by orders, which may one day prove dangerous for me, since thinking for oneself is apparently not permitted in the armed forces), but that I should make a good superior officer.

In the evening it was once again white shirt and jacket in the pantry. The French kept us waiting for a whole hour. I have never experienced such thoughtlessness before. Perhaps this is considered refined here. In any case, everyone behaved quite politely, but unfortunately no warm atmosphere developed. Even the pretty young girls whom the officers had brought with them were icy, reserved and stubborn. Perhaps they were afraid of us.

At any rate, the guests soon departed, and I was able to jump into my hammock.

MONDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 1960

This morning I tackled the tally sheet for provisions for the monthly accounts. On this sheet, all the rations consumed by each individual are entered with a stamp. Since, thank heaven, everyone received the same portions, I was able to use the same stamp for all twenty-nine days of February. I pressed the stamp down exactly 5,260 times. By lunchtime I had finished.

After lunch we went ashore quickly, because the Scharnhorst was moved into dry dock. The ship's bottom has to be inspected because we have salt in the boiler feed water. That is very unhealthy for a boiler - it could throw salt deposits into the air, and that would be more than unhealthy for us. Perhaps, in addition to the twenty-nine openings in the ship's hull, we have acquired a thirtieth.

My espionage operation - I photographed parts of the French nuclear submarine under construction through my fingers.

The dock is 180 metres long, and our little ship looks like a toy in this enormous basin. Photography is strictly forbidden. That makes things somewhat difficult for me and my camera. By shooting from the hip, however, it is still possible to take pictures unnoticed. But why should I put myself in unnecessary danger? Then again, the adventure is tempting.

We walked through the town and bought a few souvenirs. For supper we were back on board. Actually, I was keen to go to the cinema, but afterwards we no longer felt like it. I now have exactly 9 nouveaux francs and a few odd centimes left. I swear I'm going to nail those coppers to the loo door when I get home - they're worth no more than that.

TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 1960

Today I walked underneath the ship's hull. Seen from below, the ship looks far more imposing than it does from above. That is probably because the hull is shaped rather like a flat iron. Only where the keel was resting on the slipway could one make out a

small indentation. That did not inspire much confidence. But so far we have sailed our little pocket battleship very well, and we shall probably make it home safely.

In the afternoon we ran into trouble. We had to pay the French supplier his money. I always had to take the cash to the V.O.’s cabin. I pointed out to him, politely but firmly, that according to Reich Treasury regulations it was forbidden to pay out money anywhere other than at the pay office. He merely grinned and told me to hurry up. (Incidentally, he was considerably under the influence of sweet wine.)

Everything went smoothly for a while until the V.O. handed us a note with an amount on it that still had to be paid to us by a messenger. The messenger had long since left when I checked the invoices once more. Despite my complete lack of French, I discovered that the invoice from the V.O. - believe it or not - had already been paid. I caught up with the V.O. just as he was about to go ashore. He got quite a fright and bundled me, still in my white drill working rig, into a car he had somehow managed to scrounge up the night before. A very fine car, by the way.

We drove to the various warehouses one after another. The V.O. sent me in each time, although he spoke some French himself. But many people spoke a little English, and I managed to make myself understood quite well. When we finally found the right warehouse, the invoice had still not been paid. You could almost hear the stone dropping from his heart. The V.O. dropped me off at the dock and drove on.

When I was about ten metres from the gangway, it was suddenly hoisted into the air by a huge crane. Fortunately, the crane operator had a heart, and when I waved to him he lowered the gangway again for a brief moment so that I could get back aboard. Smarting (pronounced “Smadding”) grumbled that far too much fuss was being made over one man.

At 16:00 I finished preparing the mail for Germany. Upon delivery, there were still some difficulties in understanding, but then everything was clear.

On the way back, I met a nice girl who smiled at me with big eyes. In the moment she recognised my cap badge and the ribbon reading “Schulfregatte Scharnhorst”, her face turned to ice, and she walked past me, looking away. Autsch - that hurts.

WEDNESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 1960

08:00 - Departed Cherbourg. The weather was bitterly cold and

damp, and the coast soon disappeared from sight. In the evening we anchored off Portsmouth.

The sick-bay attendant weighed me. I have lost exactly ten pounds. Good heavens - I wonder where they have gone. But I am glad that my belly has disappeared. Still, something is not quite right with me. I really ought to have myself examined.

THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 1960

The weather is grey and unfriendly, but the sea is calm. I am up to my ears in my lists. There is nothing more unpleasant than bad weather at sea. One really feels cut off from the rest of the world.

I put in a request asking whether I might visit my brother Karl's parents-in-law, the Ellerys, in London. Now I only need the permission of the German Naval Attaché, Fregattenkaptän Zimmermann, in London. It will probably work out.

A short while ago we passed through the Strait of Dover and Calais. Unfortunately, the lighthouse at Dover was barely visible. Otherwise, nothing new has happened.

Under way to England

FRIDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 1960

Today is no different from yesterday in its monotony. The old tub is rolling more heavily than yesterday, but I have finally got used to it and my head remains clear. The only problem is that every job is twice as difficult. You have to be very careful not to hit the wrong keys on the typewriter.

I am currently putting together the lists for the ship's pay distribution. If I want to go up to the upper deck for a breath of fresh air, I have to wait until the ship rolls to the other side. Then I knock away the cleats, and the watertight door, which must weigh at least a hundredweight, swings open all by itself. I do the same when closing it, letting the ship's rolling motion do the work for me.

It only gets really amusing when the deck has just been freshly polished. Then all you have to do is wait for the right moment, and off you go sailing at full tilt into the opposite bulkhead (not a sport for the faint-boned). While writing, you suddenly slide a metre away from your desk, and if you do not immediately lunge forward, all your utensils come flying towards you.

We are still 90 miles off Sunderland.

SATURDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 1960

During the night we anchored off Sunderland. But the weather was too rough, so we continued on into the Firth of Forth. Shortly before reaching Edinburgh, we let go the anchor through the hawse pipe. But it was still too dangerous for our anchor cable. We did not want to have to go looking for anchor and chain a second time. So we took shelter behind a number of massive rocks at the entrance to the firth.

The two of us are preparing the final pay settlement for February.

SUNDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 1960

Half the crew are busy getting the guns ready. Tomorrow there is to be live firing.

Just now I spotted a merchant ship that was built in Kiel while we were in the same shipyard. It really is a small world.

MONDAY, 29 FEBRUARY 1960

It is 20:45. At last, the day is over. We have been paying out money all day long. You would think it wouldn’t be tiring, but the constant attention and concentration required by all that paperwork and the different currencies is so wearing that I’m quite exhausted. Unfortunately, this has not only been the case today, but almost every day. I can now fully understand how one loses weight doing this sort of work. But by the time we get back to Kiel, I shall probably have put it all on again.

I've cut down from twenty cigarettes a day to two. It agrees with me splendidly. Today is Rosenmontag (Carnival Monday). We marked the day in our own fashion - namely with the thunder of guns. All day long there was banging and booming: banging from the 4 cm gun and booming from the 10.2 cm. The lads shot very well.

The target was not lost because we hit it. Rather, just as the firing was about to begin (the A.O. - Gunnery Officer - had just

given the order to load), the target suddenly dived beneath the surface and reappeared completely torn to pieces and badly battered. We improvised by hoisting a flag on a raft.

The 4 cm anti-aircraft gun fired tracer at balloons. Unfortunately, the balloons drifted away too quickly and hitting them was impossible. My eardrums survived intact, but lamps and glasses were bursting all over the ship. In our pay office, the shock of the broadside tore the heater apart. It still gives off heat, however, and that is the main thing.

At the Commanding Officer's place, the door panels have been shaken loose, and all the dust that was normally so well hidden is now lying on the floor. In short, it is a tremendous mess, especially since everything in the immediate vicinity of the guns is heavily coated with powder soot - from the gun captain to the gun crews.

I noticed an air vent which projects about a metre up from the deck just ahead of one of the gun barrels. On the side facing the barrel it had a perfectly round dent, exactly where it had been struck by the blast pressure of the explosion.

Nevertheless, it is a pity that such expensive machines have to be used to kill other people who have done one no harm. I am glad that I am only a paper-pusher. When one sees with what uncanny precision the shells are set to detonate exactly as they approach the target, the whole dreadful spectacle does make one shudder. And yet it is terrifyingly beautiful to watch, and I can now understand why some men go to war with genuine enthusiasm.

This urge to kill and destroy lies only just beneath the surface in human beings. The less civilised a person is, the more openly it reveals itself. I must admit that what I saw impressed me deeply, and that these thoughts only occurred to me afterwards.

Even now I can still hear in my ears the shrill ringing of the alarm bells, the A.O.'s barking voice over the loudspeaker, the thunder of the broadsides, and the whining of the shells after they were fired, until the explosions of the bursting rounds came rumbling back across the water.

But duty soon called again, and while our Deutsche Mark coins danced merrily about in the cash box with every salvo and flakes of paint came drifting down from the deckhead, we carried on with our work.

Now it is high time I turned in. One further detail is worth mentioning: with every shot, the broadside hammers you down onto the deck as if struck by a giant fist. Whenever the warning bell

sounds, you must bend your knees at once to absorb the shock-otherwise your stomach will ache afterwards.

TUESDAY, 1 MARCH 1960

Nothing of particular note happened today.

In the evening the V.O. invited us to the galley. He wanted to thank his subordinates - that is, everyone in the occupational groups numbered in the 60 series: 61 for the office, 62 for the galley, 63 for supplies, and 64 for the pay office - for the work we had done so far. To mark the occasion he provided two bottles of Spanish brandy and several bottles of beer. There were fourteen of us crowded into the tiny galley.

I spent the whole evening perched on the still-warm cooker. The advantage was that after three bottles of beer I was already singing away happily. My boss then became rather emotional and, with the utmost seriousness, told me that he had cancer. I was thoroughly alarmed and tried to calm him down. But he is firmly convinced that he will soon die.

The medic believes that he is imagining the worst. Nevertheless, there must be something to it, because he suffers from a bladder complaint. The cause is unknown, and how it is to be treated is still unclear. It is a depressing feeling to work with someone who seems to have lost all positive outlook on life. Our relationship, however, remains unchanged. He can give you a really severe dressing-down in the most humane way imaginable..

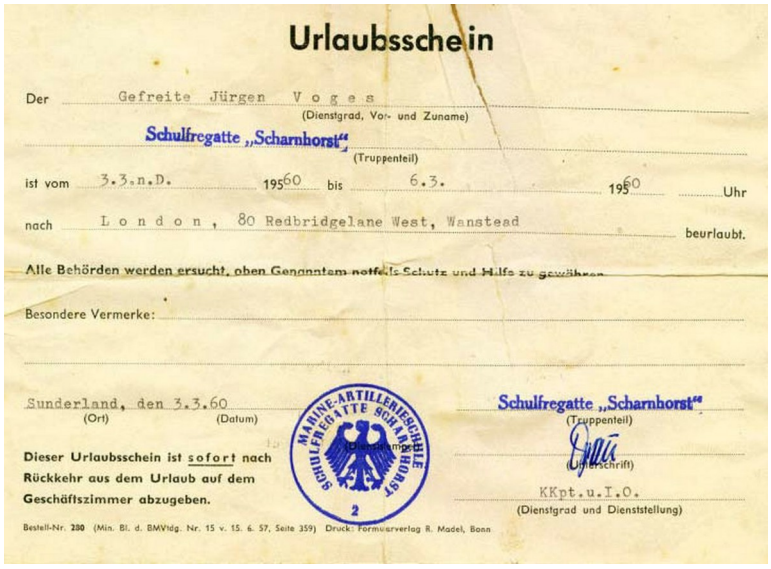
Although I must honestly admit that I do not always take the truth very well, I am nevertheless glad when it happens, for people who tell you what they really think are better friends than those who try to gain advantages by toadying to you.

WEDNESDAY, 2 MARCH 1960

Today an Grumman HU-16 Albatross (a seaplane) from Kiel was supposed to arrive to take a sick shipmate home. The official mail was to go back with the pilot. But no such luck - the plane never came. And that was just as well, because by the time he arrived I would hardly have had my office in proper order.

At 22:00 we weighed anchor and left the Firth of Forth. At midnight, after a long and much-needed shower, I was finally able to crawl into my bunk.

THURSDAY, 3 MARCH 1960



Urlaubsschein

Der Gefreite Jürgen Voges
(Dienstgrad, Vor- und Zuname)

Schulfregatte „Scharnhorst"
(Truppenteil)

ist vom 3.3.n.D. 1960 bis 6.3. 1960 Uhr

nach London, 80 Redbridgelane West, Wanstead beurlaubt.

Alle Behörden werden ersucht, oben Genanntem nötigenfalls Schutz und Hilfe zu gewähren.

Besondere Vermerke:

Sunderland, den 3.3.60
(Ort) (Datum)

Schulfregatte „Scharnhorst"
(Truppenteil)

(Unterschrift)

KKpt.u.I.O.
(Dienstgrad und Dienststellung)

Dieser Urlaubsschein ist sofort nach Rückkehr aus dem Urlaub auf dem Geschäftszimmer abzugeben.

MARINE-ARTILLERIESCHULE SCHULFREGATTE SCHARNHORST 2

Bestell-Nr. 280 (Min. Bl. d. BMVtdg. Nr. 15 v. 15. 6. 57, Seite 359) Druck: Formularverlag R. Madel, Bonn

Leave Pass - issued to Marinegefreiter Jürgen Voges of the training frigate Scharnhorst.

07:00 - We arrived in Sunderland. In great haste I gathered together my *Plünnen* - all my bits and pieces - stuffed them into my bag, and set off for London. At Newcastle upon Tyne I missed my train by a matter of seconds, but that at least gave me the chance to have some breakfast: sandwiches and tea.

I paid 10 shillings and 4 pence for the return ticket. I am tired enough to drop, but I cannot sleep. I am curious to see what the Ellerys will say when I turn up on their doorstep.

Editor's note: The London Underground map shown here dates from the early 1970s and was added later by the author as an illustration. It is not contemporary with the events described in March 1960.

On arriving in London, I first went into a telephone box and called home. It took a very long time, but in the end it worked out after all.

Then I took the London Underground. However, I got off as early as Leytonstone and still had another mile and a half to walk, plus part of the way by bus. At last I arrived, and they were very pleased to see me. Finally, I was able to sink into my bunk and sleep.

FRIDAY, 4 MARCH 1960

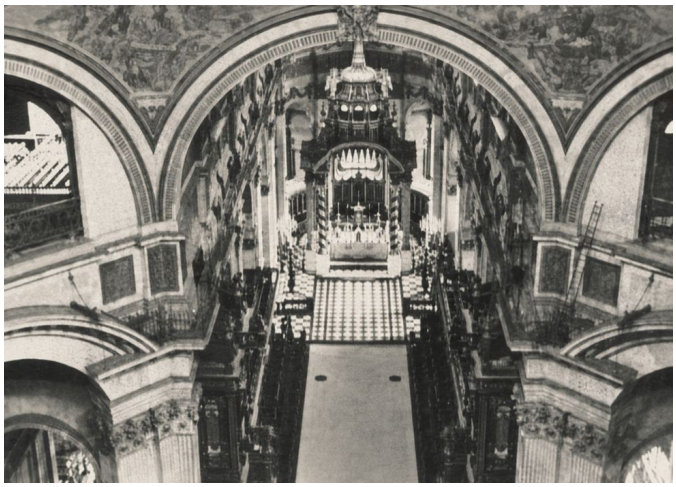
View from the lantern at the top of St Paul's dome

What a rare luxury I enjoyed today: I was able to sack out until 10:00. After that I took the London Underground to St Paul's Cathedral. It took me quite a while to explore the great cathedral. To be honest, it was terribly exhausting, as I climbed right up to the very top of the enormous dome. A kindly member of staff showed me the Whispering Gallery. It was astonishing how the sound of a whispered word travelled around the dome.

After a hurried lunch of hamburgers, I walked along the banks of the River Thames. Moored there quite modestly amid the imposing buildings of Scotland Yard, Shell plc, BP and the The Savoy was the RRS Discovery.

On board HMS Discovery

The Discovery, Captain Robert Falcon Scott's expedition ship, looks rather unassuming, but it is immensely solidly built. Its sides are made of oak planking more than 30 centimetres thick. The ship was specially constructed for Scott's expedition. Four anchors lie on the forecastle. She was sail-powered, with an auxiliary steam engine for use when she became trapped in the ice. The rudder can be lifted out so that it will not break in pack ice. A friendly Bootsmann showed me the mess where Scott and his companions had



The nave of St Paul's Cathedral

lived. I must say, it is not at all uncomfortable, with a French fireplace and single cabins with running water.

The ship is used for training naval auxiliaries. Unfortunately, I did not see any. The young women in their naval uniforms looked incredibly smart - far better turned out than their male colleagues.

Later I walked along Fleet Street, the newspaper centre of England. The Daily Express and the Reuters photo agency are located there.

When I was on my way to St James's Park, an elderly gentleman addressed me in German. He was a Norwegian and accompanied me for a while. He was a fascinating conversationalist. We passed a barracks where a number of soldiers from the Guards Regiment were drilling for the changing of the guard. I felt quite sorry for the poor fellows.

Fleet Street

Above all, their style of marching seemed very old-fashioned. At the command "Attention!" the right leg was swung up quite high, and the same happened at "Stand at ease!". That must get pretty very tiring after a time. They even performed the parade step in waltz time. I would have mutinied if things had been done that way. After all, I had offered my labour and had not joined up to play the fool.

That must become quite exhausting after a while.

I stood before the Cenotaph, the national war memorial. I wondered

whether I should render a military salute, but in the end I decided against it, as I did not want to give the Attaché (who had granted me leave) any cause for trouble.

In front of Buckingham Palace there was a crowd of press photographers. Apparently they were waiting for "the baby" (Prince Andrew, born on 19 February 1960) to produce a smile. I had never experienced anything so ridiculous as the fuss surrounding the Queen's latest child. On the television news they announced every day how many pounds the little worm had put on. One woman had stood outside the palace all night with her eighteen-month-old child while the Queen was giving birth - she ought to have her head examined.

I did not hear much good about the English from my companion. He said that the economy was infested with Jews, and the press as well (which, he claimed, explained the attacks on Germany). I saw a number of film posters - fifteen years after the war - that made my blood run cold. They advertised documentary films about Auschwitz. I had often read that men and women were led naked to their mass graves and then shot. That was disturbing enough to read about, but to see the same scenes in photographs was simply revolting. Why show such things to people? It is sheer propaganda - crude and malicious in the extreme. Who in Germany at the time knew about these dreadful crimes against mostly innocent people?[8] And yet I am still proud to be German. Germans are people who say yes when they mean yes, and that has only now struck me.

At 19:00 I staggered, utterly exhausted, into the Underground and was back at the Ellerys' home by 20:00. When I took off my shoes, I discovered that my new Perlon socks already had holes in them.

SATURDAY, 5 MARCH 1960

Slept late. Then went shopping with Mr and Mrs Ellery. As usual when I am in England, I came down with a proper cold and spent the whole day at home in front of the television. Constantly speaking English is very tiring, but one learns quickly.

SUNDAY, 6 MARCH 1960

I spent another very cold night. It is miserable when your feet

8) *Editor's note:* Born in 1938, Jürgen Voges was seven years old when the war ended. His remarks reflect a common post-war belief that ordinary Germans had known little about Nazi crimes. Historical research has since shown that many adults were aware of persecution, deportations, and mass murder, while a broader public reckoning with these crimes did not begin in West Germany until the late 1950s and 1960s.

are constantly cold. Lying all night in a crooked position is no real honey either. Even so, I got up very late.

At 13:30 I had to say goodbye to the Ellerys. They are wonderful people. If you are not careful, they will give you everything that is not nailed down. I shall have to return the kindness when I am back in Germany and send them a present.

Before my train left, I visited a cafeteria (a self-service restaurant). Unfortunately, I picked up a packet of “sausage rolls” more or less at random. They are made of shortcrust pastry with a meat filling. I had barely taken a bite when I dropped it again - good heavens, how can anyone eat such a thing?

Outside, the English countryside rolled by. Very monotonous, though at times quite attractive. It reminded me of northern Germany. The train stopped rather often because the main line was closed for engineering works (which are always carried out on Sundays), and the train had to take several detours. Opposite me sat a genuine farmer’s wife. She had been visiting her daughter in London and spoke with great indignation about the fact that the girl was not even learning to cook properly in the hospital. She talked to me like a waterfall. At first she did not realise that I was a foreigner, but then she noticed my bow tie and asked whether I was Dutch.

It struck me that in England people do not sit opposite one another in silence for more than a quarter of an hour; they very quickly begin to feel like one large family. After a nine-hour journey, the train finally arrived in Sunderland. I left my luggage at a taxi stand and wandered through the little town for a while. But there was nothing much going on, so I got into a taxi and had myself driven home - that is to say, back to the ship.

MONDAY, 7 MARCH 1960

By 09:00 the mail was ready, and Günther and I hurried to the post office to send it off. But the hidebound postal clerk did not recognise our international forms and refused to accept them. When the clock struck half past nine, he finally bestirred himself and took the letters after all - free of charge this time, too.

We were due to sail at 10:00. There is a rare sense of satisfaction in knowing that a ship of 1,900 tons with a crew of 180 men has to wait for two ordinary lads. On the way, we bought a tobacco pipe, and I took my time picking up two raisin cakes as well. When I suggested stopping for a glass of beer, the idea came to nothing because all the pubs were still closed.

Shortly before reaching the harbour, we ran into a crowd of "Faithful Souls" (as we call the devoted local girls in every port). They greeted us with Indian war whoops and came charging towards us as if the Furies were after them. I was already preparing to make my escape, but they only wanted to hand over a few letters for some of the lads, as the poor girls had not been allowed into the dock.

At exactly 10:00 we were back on board, and the gangway was hauled in behind us. Even in the harbour we could see the sea breaking over the embankments. There was one last minor complication as we were leaving: while turning and then going astern, we ran aground in the mud. But after only a few minutes, a tug had pulled us free again.

By then the "Faithful Souls" had run all the way around the harbour basin to the breakwater and were waving to us, blue with cold and chattering with their teeth. (Hence the nickname "Faithful Souls").

Even when the pilot tried to leave the ship, it was scarcely possible. Only a determined leap into his pilot boat saved him. Then it hit us. The ship suddenly gave a great lurch forward and then - let us draw a veil over what happened to me - we began plunging up and down in the murderous sea.

We were fortunate to have the sea ahead of us. A head sea is rather unpleasant for the body - one feels as though one were in a lift - but at least less gets broken. It was just as well that working was impossible, because I was able to retreat to my chap and make up, twofold and threefold, for all the sleep I had missed.

TUESDAY, 8 MARCH 1960

The sea was just as heavy as yesterday. No work today either. Slept a lot. Plenty of water on the mess decks. It came in through every crack in the watertight doors and even through the ventilators. The sea was raging fiercely. The wavebreaker has been torn away.

WEDNESDAY, 9 MARCH 1960

500 metres of ice off the Swedish coast.The lines for the forward navigation lights were hopelessly frozen solid."Tell me, isn't there any hot water?"

During the night the old tub rolled so heavily that the drawers in the office flew open and scattered their contents all over the deck. Papers, chairs, shoes and socks - a hopeless jumble. We held open a mail sack, stuffed everything into it and lashed it down somewhere. Sleep was poor, but then we were not exactly tired anyway.

THURSDAY, 10 MARCH 1960

When we were called in the morning, the old tub was already lying quite steadily. It was a beautiful morning. We were abeam of the Danish coast. Towards evening we dropped anchor in the skerries, sixty miles from Halmstad. It was bitterly cold there. The ice along the coast extended nearly five hundred metres out to sea.

I was fully occupied again. This time it meant translating the English invoices. It is almost ridiculous what has to be done with these papers. For example, I had a receipt for newspapers amounting to the equivalent of 1.66 Deutsche Mark. I first pasted this receipt onto a sheet of A5 paper. Then I had to make two copies of it in English. These three documents I translated on the reverse side. Since every expenditure had to be justified, I wrote a lengthy explanation: why, for what purpose, and on what grounds. These three scraps of paper then had to be signed twelve times (!!!) and certified twice. No wonder everything took so long. And this was only one example among many.

FRIDAY, 11 MARCH 1960

This morning a warship appeared on the horizon and quickly grew larger. It was a Swedish frigate (No. 73, Mode). She was making great speed, and even the guns were manned. Good Lord - we must seem terribly dangerous. Before photography is forbidden, I quickly take a few pictures. The frigate lowers a boat. The sailors are wearing steel helmets, and the coxswain has a sub-machine gun resting between his knees. Once the officer has come aboard, the boat casts off at once and keeps at a safe distance.

the Swedish frigate

By 20:30 I had finished the last of my paperwork. I am very pleased about that. Tomorrow the V.O. will probably get tendonitis again from signing everything. He has to sign his name 103 times.

SATURDAY, 12 MARCH 1960

Spent the whole day writing acknowledgements of receipt. During the lunch break and again after supper I did the washing with steam. It works quite well. You take a bucket with washing powder, throw in your dirty kit, and let hot steam into the pail filled with water. After half an hour the washing is literally cooked. One has to be careful with socks - they shrink dreadfully.

SUNDAY, 13 MARCH 1960

No Sunday for us today. The ice along the coast is breaking up and drifting past us. On some of the floes, colonies of gulls are sitting and watching us with great dignity. Boat drill in the evening.

MONDAY, 14 MARCH 1960

Added up the entire postage account. In the evening we saw a slide show of our voyage. Very tired.

TUESDAY, 15 MARCH 1960

I wrote out the lists for the cost-of-living allowance (35%; four days BO at 1.50, making 6.00, of which 35% equals 2.10). In the afternoon we had emergency-station duty.Everyone on board has assigned roles (functions) which he must take up when the ship enters a special situation. That is to say, when there is a "Man Overboard" alarm, everything proceeds according to the stations assigned beforehand. These include the boat's crew, the hauling and lowering parties, and the groups "at the ladder." At the sig-

nal from the alarm bell - three long rings - the key men dash through the passageways shouting, “Make way - boat’s crew!”, and no one is allowed to obstruct them.

Schaubild 1: I am drawing up the emergency station roster for every member of the ship’s company.

Once the cutter is manned, the lowering party begins to ease it carefully but quickly over the ship’s side. When the buoy (during exercises a lifebuoy is used) has been recovered, the cutter is hoisted aboard again. For this, almost the entire ship’s company falls in as the haul-away party. The cutter is shackled to two lines about the thickness of two fingers. The lines lie side by side and run from the boat deck to the forecastle. At the command “Take hold and haul through,” the hauling party grabs the lines lying on deck and hauls them taut so that the cutter comes up level.

The Bootsmann’s Mate then gives the order to hoist. This procedure is known as the Kutterläufer, because the cutter is literally worked up by the rhythmic blasts of the Bootsmann’s call and the stamping of feet - starting slowly and gradually gathering speed.

Once the cutter is up, one long whistle blast sounds and all hands turn round and lean back to hold the cutter with their own weight until it is securely fastened. Then the final whistle sounds and the lines are thrown onto the deck. The cutter is tremendously heavy, because at times a hundred men are pulling on one rope and it still moves only with difficulty.

Things are a bit quieter in the group called “At the Ladder”, which I belong to. Two men fetch a ladder, the section leader (our office petty officer) lowers a section of the guardrail, and I get myself a heaving line, a boat hook and a lifejacket, which I put on straight away. I tie the heaving line around my waist with a bowline (a knot that does not tighten) and secure the other end to a stanchion of the rail with a clove hitch. Then, armed with the boat hook, I lie down on the ladder and give the order to launch the buoy, which drifts along the ship’s side.

When the buoy has come close enough, the ladder is tipped forward and I hook the boat hook into the loop provided on the lifebuoy. Once I have snagged the buoy, I report to the bridge over the ship’s intercom: “Buoy recovered.”

I am on the ladder

Ready for the ladder party.

Apart from the "Man Overboard" drill, there are several other emergency stations. There is the rescue station (everyone has a fixed place on a life raft and his own locker for his life-jacket), the closure station (also known as "Close up all watertight doors"), and the action station. This last one would be rather unpleasant for me in a real emergency, because I am assigned as ammunition handler in No. 1 magazine, and the shell hoist runs faster than I can load the things. But if a shell were to hit where I am, the others would not get away either.

Since, in the First Officer's opinion, we had worked very quickly, we were allowed to secure from duty. I received the gracious permission to do my kit maintenance after working hours. Well, things have come to such a pass that this already seems unusual, but we simply have an enormous amount to do. In any case, I pressed my uniform trousers, a white shirt (what a drama with the brown scorching marks-but cleverly enough I ironed it from the inside), and a few small items.

My own iron is completely ruined. The soleplate suddenly melted and became warped. It is an iron designed only for alternating current, while I have only direct current available.

I weighed myself at the sick bay. Very pleasing indeed, because I am back up to 144 pounds.

WEDNESDAY, 16 MARCH 1960

Spent the entire morning preparing and writing out the lists for the allowance payments.

During the lunch break I cleaned seven pairs of shoes. It was high time, too, because my shoes were already beginning to go mouldy in the damp conditions on board. The others may poke fun at my zeal, but if I want to keep my "Sehr Gut" ("Very Good") mark in kit maintenance, I have to do something about it, whether I like it or not. Besides, it is in one's own interest whether one goes about looking clean or shabby. As for me, I decidedly prefer the former.

In the afternoon I carried on working on the lists. Outside, great ice floes drifted past, and at times the entire ship was enclosed by them.

THURSDAY, 17 MARCH 1960

We shifted berth to Halmstad. It was a wonderfully calm passage.

Scharnhorst at last safely berthed in Halmstad

In the afternoon we had a customs briefing. We were warned to keep no cigarettes in our lockers, as the customs officers would be searching the entire ship. In my opinion it was probably just a bluff, but I hid my five cartons (1,000 cigarettes) carefully all the same - in a ventilation duct.

After work I wrote up an

The Gunnery Officer brings the ship alongside - The Swedish flag is being hoisted. - If only the water were always this calm.

account of my experiences for the V.O. It ran to more than ten pages.

FRIDAY, 18 MARCH 1960

At 08:30 we weighed anchor and entered Halmstad. There were even people there to welcome us.

I went ashore straight away and, together with a few of my mates, collected four mailbags from Germany. Before going ashore, I smashed my head with full force against a bulkhead *(one should always duck when climbing through a hatch).* I now have the constant feeling that I am walking around without the top of my skull.

After that, the V.O. took me to the bank to collect our 35,000 Swedish crowns. It is marvellous that most Swedes speak German, so we had no difficulties at all. On the way to the post office I warned my mates not to make any foolish remarks. But one of them, naturally, could not restrain himself and made a comment about one of the young women at the post office. She answered his question about the mailbags in German.

Unfortunately I am confined to the ship today and cannot go ashore. In the afternoon we issued foreign currency to the ship's company.

SATURDAY, 19 MARCH 1960

After securing from duty, we went ashore. We took a short walk through Halmstad, simply to enjoy a few hours of fresh air at last.

My boss had a "nervous breakdown" this morning. He had just been told that he was to be sent back to America. (He had only re-

cently returned from America, then completed the accounting officer's course, and immediately afterwards joined us on this overseas training cruise.) That was too much for him, because his wife would under no circumstances agree to it. But that is the way things are in the military - no consideration is given to the individual. Where would one end up otherwise? In any case, I virtually had to drag him ashore.

After supper we returned on board. Once I had dealt with my correspondence - as I groaningly call it - we went to the cinema. They were showing a German film in German with Swedish subtitles.

Afterwards I went by myself to the People's Park, where there was dancing. But I was not especially keen on it. First I tried the Swedish beer, which was nothing remarkable. Then I had coffee and cake and was pleasantly surprised. It tasted just as good as at home. That made the Swedes considerably more likeable to me. At last the dance floor had its effect on me as well. I asked a young lady to dance and was rather surprised and perplexed by the way she put her arms around me. But dancing with her went quite well (because of the distance), and the others were dancing just as closely embraced. Eventually I began to sweat, and then the whole business ceased to be enjoyable. I contented myself with watching.

The Swedes enjoy a very high standard of living. They are always immaculately turned out - clean and smart. Almost everyone owns some sort of vehicle. A highly skilled worker can earn up to 12 kronor an hour, which is equivalent to 9.67 Deutsche Marks. But taxes are correspondingly high. Even postcards have to be paid for with additional sales tax afterwards..

SUNDAY, 20 MARCH 1960

Today the ship was opened to visitors for two hours. I had to stand watch in the wheelhouse to make sure that no one walked off

with the helm or got onto the bridge. It was quite a job. Hardly had the gangway been opened when a great swarm of little boys stormed the ship. Suddenly they were scaling the outside of the bridge, and I had my hands full chasing them down again.

Communication worked reasonably well. If all else failed, I spoke Low German, which sounds more or less Scandinavian. Many people could speak German or English, so everything went quite smoothly.

After two hours I had had quite enough, especially as it was bitterly cold outside. Turned in early.

MONDAY, 21 MARCH 1960

Today I was given another mailbag. There were even a few letters and photographs for me in it. I was very pleased.

In the afternoon I strolled through the streets for a while, then went to a café and had coffee and cake. Afterwards I wandered slowly back on board. I changed clothes and worked until 21:00, then spent another two hours answering letters, finally turning in at 23:00.

TUESDAY, 22 MARCH 1960

Today my brother Ernst-August is getting married in a civil ceremony. "Fair winds and following seas!"

Today, fifteen years ago, my home town[9] was 66 per cent destroyed by British bombs. A strange world - only a few weeks ago we were in England ourselves and got on very well with the people there.

At 10:00 we were ready for sea. The pier was crowded with girls, and the lads were waving enthusiastically. The weather was exactly as fine as it had been fifteen years earlier. Brilliant sunshine, a blue sea as smooth as a bathtub.

We had plenty of time: two and a half days for a passage that could have been made in eighteen hours. At 17:15 we encountered two fast patrol boats. They were travelling so quickly that our old tub began to rock.

At 20:00 anchor dropped.

WEDNESDAY, 23 MARCH 1960

In magnificent weather we steam through the Great Belt over a sea as smooth as a mirror. Passed Nyborg. In the evening we leave Langeland astern. At 00:30 we are to anchor, as we have orders

9) *Editor's note:* it's Hildesheim in Lower Saxony

not to be back home until 24 March.

THURSDAY, 24 MARCH 1960

The first thing I see when I wake up is the view through the porthole. Sure enough, it really is Strander Bay.

in Strander Bay

The Artillerieschule (Gunnery School) sends over its boat, and at the same time the customs officers board our ship. Yesterday we all had to hand in our customs declarations. I wrote down everything that was guaranteed not to be subject to duty. People like to be fooled. I then calmly retrieved my 1,000 cigarettes from their hiding places. The handkerchiefs I sent home to Mother (they had been a gift from a shipping company in Belfast) had to be declared by the other shipmates at a cost of 0.90 Deutsche Mark. Some had to pay 1.10 Deutsche Mark duty on gramophone records. What do we actually have a radio room for? Things can be hidden there quite safely and securely.

In the afternoon we rehearsed for tomorrow's inspection by Admiral Erhardt. The officers are the ones most worked up about it. After all, quite a lot depends for them on the inspection going well. The press and the newsreel people have already come aboard as well. We are amused by the clumsy way the journalists are transferred from the harbour boats to our ship in today's somewhat choppy sea. They behave like a group of washerwomen afraid that someone might look under their skirts.

Our tub has a very lively motion. That is due to the ship's stability characteristics. There are, or rather we distinguish, two types of stability: *stiff* and *tender*[10].

If a ship is stiff, its centre of gravity lies high

10) *Editor's note:* what sailors call "tender" in its initial roll behaviour, yet fundamentally very stable overall

The tug is towing us to Tirpitz Pier.- The Gorch Fock is there, and so are Z 1 and Z 2.

above the water. The advantage is that the ship lies very steadily. But when a storm comes, it can only meet the breaking seas sluggishly; in other words, it rights itself only slowly, which increases the danger of capsizing. If, on the other hand, a ship is tender, it begins to roll easily, but like a roly-poly toy it always returns upright and is considerably safer. Its centre of gravity therefore lies closer to the waterline. Our frigate is of the tender type and is therefore suitable for all the world's oceans despite her modest size. Our steamer has even operated in the notorious Sea of Japan.

(Added later: the ship also has stabilising fins amidships on the port and starboard sides, which are extended when firing so as not to miss the target. In rough seas you can feel the difference quite clearly.)

FRIDAY, 25 MARCH 1960

Today we were inspected by Konteradmiral Erhardt. He was brought over from Strande in the harbour launch. The little boat almost disappeared between the wave troughs, but eventually managed to come alongside and make fast.

The Admiral marched down the line. Then we were dismissed to our stations. At half past ten the signal was given: "*Buoy overboard!*".

The cutter was lowered and went to recover the buoy. I joined the hoisting party, and during the Kutterläufer (the rhythmic hauling-in of the cutter) I pulled with a will. Then, all at once - it was exactly 10:50 - a great shout went up. The forward hoisting line of the cutter had parted, and the boat shot, at a shallow angle, over the gunwale into the roughly 75-centimetre-high waves. The men in the cutter were thrown out by the impact. We immediately let go the after hoisting line so that no one would be trapped beneath the boat. After that we inflated lifejackets and let them slide down along the manropes, or threw them to the men in the water.

It must be said, by way of criticism, that these lifejackets are complete rubbish. They are fitted with a compressed-air cylinder

which, according to the instructions, is supposed to inflate the jacket. In reality only the collar became firm - nothing else. One of the men suffered shock from the cold water and would probably have drowned if the boat officer had not held on to him.

The motor launch was made ready at once and, after some difficult manoeuvring - during which it lost its rudder - pulled the casualties from the water. The cutter itself presented a pitiful sight. Everything that was not firmly fastened down was smashed or torn away by the sea.

At 16:10 we weighed anchor and at last set course for Tirpitz Pier in Kiel. On the end of the mole we were welcomed by the Navy Band playing a few lively marches.

Berthing at Tirpitz Pier, Kiel.

Once all the lines were fast, the barrier holding back the relatives and friends of the lads was simply overwhelmed, and like an avalanche the crowd poured onto our ship. What a reunion that was!

It is a wonderful feeling to be home again.

My summary of our journey:

I got to know foreign countries and people, and I took very seriously the task of being an ambassador of goodwill for my home. This may sound a bit formal, but in the end it depended on the goodwill of each and every one of us - from the commanding officer down to the youngest sailor.

Federal Chancellor Adenauer wanted to have our voyage stopped even before departure, because of the hatred towards Germans. The Inspector of the Navy Vizeadmiral (Vice Admiral) Ruge, conveyed his thanks to us through Konteradmiral Erhardt.

We did our job well, and we are proud of it. It was not always easy to convince people that Germans were not ogres. But with patience and the easy self-confidence that comes naturally to the lads, we managed it. But it certainly wasn’t a leisurely holiday. I have never worked as much as on this old steamer.

Nothing is handed to you for free. But if one wants to get ahead, one must come to terms with this in good time. A certain amount of ambition is necessary.- but you mustn’t forget those around you. Otherwise, one may fare like the prince in The Thousand and One Nights who compelled magic to reveal his future and then died after he had seen it. The desire for an active life probably exists in almost everyone, and the saying, “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,” applies very well here.

For me, it is really quite simple: I am forced into a way of life that at first goes against the grain and to the instincts of an independently minded person, but which, after some reflection, reveals the wisdom of a meaningful balance between rest and work.

Naturally, the human shortcomings of one’s superiors play a major role. A superior must be strict, but fair. If he shows even slight signs of inconsistency, or reveals a soft spot in his character at the wrong moment, he will unconsciously (and I stress unconsciously) lose the respect of the crew. From there, it is only a small step to open insubordination towards him. I can confirm this, because I experienced it myself. When we had the officer candidates on board, the crew felt abandoned (I exclude myself, because I have very little contact with the rest of the crew and have my own area of responsibility, and because I had already thought about this problem before the OA's embarked and was by no means surprised by the way events developed).

There was a distinctly tense atmosphere between the two decks. When we were ordered to address the officer candidates as “Sir”

(Sie), it almost caused a mutiny, and the instruction was withdrawn because of precisely that shortcoming. Considering that the OA's had been soldiers for only six months, one can easily imagine that an experienced Obergefreiter would not tolerate such a demand.

In any case, the atmosphere was never cordial. Nevertheless, and this must be said to their credit, the sailors gave the officer candidates a helping hand and taught them a good deal of practical sense. Now they have gone and peace has returned. The “lads” are friendlier to one another again, and I feel at ease once more when I walk through the mess deck.

It really was a considerable strain on everyone’s nerves during those six months. Always on guard, always busy, always under tension - and yet already making new plans. In the autumn another overseas training cruise is planned. Unfortunately, I will not be able to take part, because by then I shall probably be attending the Naval Administration School (MVS) and studying.

For myself, I wish that I always remain a decent and honest person, in every situation. What good is a pile of money to me if I have to despise myself?

Tja, that is probably all I have to say. The rest is a pleasant memory. I have become a bit more experienced in life and have made the conscious effort to put the bad days behind me.

Glossary of Military Ranks

Translator’s Note

The following glossary explains German naval ranks used in this diary. In order to preserve the historical character and authentic language of the Bundesmarine in 1960, German rank titles and certain traditional terms have been retained throughout the translation. At their first occurrence, they are accompanied by an English explanation or approximate equivalent.

German Rank / Term	**English Explanation / Approximate Equivalent**
Marinegefreiter	German naval enlisted rank, approx. NATO OR-2; roughly comparable to Able Seaman
Gefreiter	German enlisted rank, approx. NATO OR-3;roughly comparable to Leading Seaman
Obergefreiter	German enlisted rank, approx. NATO OR-4
Maat	Petty Officer
Obermaat	Senior Petty Officer
Bootsmann	Boatswain; senior petty officer in charge of seamanship
Fregattenkapitän	Commander
Kapitänleutnant (Kptlt)	Lieutenant Commander
Kapitän zur See	Captain (naval rank)
Konteradmiral	Rear Admiral
Vizeadmiral	Vice Admiral
Zahlmeister	Paymaster; officer responsible for accounts and finances
Rechnungsführer (Refü)	Paymaster; ship’s accountant and disbursing officer
Chap	shipboard slang for an office/compartment; origin uncertain
Refüchap	Paymaster’s Office

German Rank / Term	**English Explanation / Approximate Equivalent**
Offiziersanwärter (OA)	Officer Cadets, Officer Candidates
Portopeeunteroffizier	senior non-commissioned officer (equivalent to a senior petty officer)
I.O. (Erster Offizier	First Officer / Executive Officer
V.O. (Versorgungsoffizier)	Supply Officer
W.O. (Wachoffizier)	Officer of the Watch
A.O. (Artillerieoffizier)	Gunnery Officer
I.W.O. (I. Wachoffizier)	First Watch Officer

The English explanations given above are intended solely as approximate equivalents to aid readers unfamiliar with German naval terminology.